



**City of Santa Barbara**  
Parks and Recreation Department

**Memorandum**

**DATE:** November 18, 2009

**TO:** Creeks Restoration/Water Quality Improvement Program  
Citizen Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Cameron Benson, Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager

**SUBJECT:** Manager's Program Update – For Information

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The purpose of this report is to provide an update on various program activities and other City projects related to creeks and water quality.

**Burn Area Status**

Most of the storm preparation in the Jesusita and Tea Fire burn areas, including debris basin excavation, creek clearing, and aerial hydromulching, was completed by early October. The work was performed by the County Flood Control District, City Public Works Department, and U.S. Forest Service.

Santa Barbara received a significant early-season rain event on October 13 -14, 2009. According to the County Flood Control District records, the storm dropped 3.64 inches of rain on downtown Santa Barbara, and 9.79 inches at the top of San Marcos Pass. These rain totals represent the second highest, and highest, one-day October storm events in recorded history (144 years).

Even with these high rain totals, however, the burn areas and City creeks held up very well, with no reports of significant flooding, erosion or debris flows.

**Capital Program Update**

Upper Las Positas Creek Restoration and Storm Water Improvement Project

The Upper Las Positas Creek Restoration and Storm Water Improvement Project consists of construction of a series of bioswales and detention systems to detain and filter polluted storm water and incidental urban runoff. The project is planned to improve the quality of water entering Las Positas Creek and the Arroyo Burro Estuary.

On October 13 and 14, 2009, Santa Barbara received approximately 3.5 inches of rain in an early season storm event. The storm revealed design deficiencies in several project components. In addition, the erosion control, planting, and irrigation had yet to

be completed, leaving portions of the golf course vulnerable during the storm event. Significant damage occurred.

Because we are entering the rainy season, it is essential to move as quickly as possible to complete the project. On October 27, staff requested and City Council approved an additional \$250,000 in change order authority to implement short term protections in case of another storm event and longer term solutions that have included redesign and extra work beyond the scope of the original construction contract. As the costs for the total repair are quantified, Staff may return to Council to further increase the change order authority. Staff is also investigating contractual and other responsibilities regarding how to recover some of these expenses.

City staff has been working with the design engineer and the construction contractor to assess the extent and cause of the damage, and to expedite implementation of appropriate remedies. Many of the remedial steps have been completed, and others are currently under construction.

#### Catch Basin Inlet Storm Drain Screens Project

Catch basin inlet storm drain screens are being installed in all of the catch basin openings in the City (approximately 1400 inlets). The stainless steel retractable screens will keep trash from entering the storm drains, creeks, estuaries, and the ocean.

The screens have perforated holes that allow moderate amounts of water to flow through while holding trash back at the curb side. Trash that is stopped in front of the screens is picked up by street sweeping trucks on their scheduled routes. To prevent the risk of flooding during large storms, the screens are designed to open and allow fast flowing water through. After the heavy storm water flow subsides, the screens swing back into place against the catch basin opening parallel to the curbside.

Installations are moving forward on schedule, and will be completed by December 2010. Two hundred nineteen screens have been installed to date in the neighborhoods of the Westside, Mesa, and western Montecito. The next areas slated for catch basin screens are the Riviera, San Roque, and portions of downtown.

#### Water Quality Research Projects

The Creeks Division has two ongoing water quality research projects funded by grants from the State Water Board's Proposition 50 Clean Beaches Initiative Grant Program.

The Laguna Watershed Study and Water Quality Improvement Project includes dry-weather hydrology analysis, microbial source tracking, a project feasibility analysis, and water quality improvement project recommendations. The grant also funds preliminary design and CEQA review of the recommended project, in order for the City to be qualified to apply for a grant to fund final design and construction of the recommended project. The Watershed Study has been completed, with the recommendation of UV disinfection at the discharge of Laguna Channel.

The Microbial Source Tracking Protocol Development Project will develop tools to track human fecal contamination in Santa Barbara watersheds to its source. The grant will fund UCSB scientists to investigate potential sewer leaks to storm drains, assess the loads of contamination coming from suspected drains, and employ autosamplers to collect samples from storm drains during suspected flushing events.

As the Committee was informed in March 2009, both projects were partially delayed due to a statewide grant funding freeze in December 2008. Last week, staff received word that bond funding for these projects has been restored. As a result, full implementation of the projects will resume immediately.

### **New Regional Water Quality Control Board Process**

The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) is currently engaged in a two-year effort to develop new hydromodification control criteria that will become a mandatory requirement in the City's Storm Water Management Program (SWMP). All municipal storm water discharge permit holders in the Central Coast region have been invited to participate in a "Joint Effort" to develop these new criteria, or to face immediate implementation of Water Board-developed criteria. In an attempt to ensure that the new criteria will be effective and usable in the City of Santa Barbara's land development process, Creeks Division staff have agreed to participate in the process. The initial meeting for the Joint Effort is scheduled for November 20, 2009.

### **Creek Tree Program**

The Creek Tree Program is focused on improving the riparian corridor along City creeks through the planting of native riparian trees on private property. The program provides landscape supplies and services to property owners along City creeks, including the installation of native riparian trees and drip irrigation on the upper creek banks. City staff coordinates the projects and provides the supplies and services. The maximum cost for each project is \$5,000. For small projects (less than \$1,000) the City provides all the funding. For projects over \$1,000, the property owner must match 25% of the project cost beyond the initial \$1,000 provided by the City (up to \$1,000 for a \$5,000 project).

There have been no new creek tree projects implemented over the last 6 months. Currently, we are processing two project applications, and have been informed that a third application is forthcoming. The three projects would total approximately 25 trees and would be located on Las Positas Creek, Lower Arroyo Burro, and a tributary to San Roque Creek. The projects are scheduled for installation in early December. These projects were all a result of individual contacts by Creeks Division staff and were not the result of a focused marketing effort. As staff time becomes available, a focused marketing effort will be implemented. The initial goal of the program was to implement one creek tree project per month.

## **Creek Week 2009**

Over 1,000 community members participated in 23 events during Santa Barbara's 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Creek Week, held September 19-26. Coordinated by the City Creeks Division, County Project Clean Water, the City of Carpinteria, and the City of Goleta, Creek Week kicked off with the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Coastal Cleanup Day on September 19<sup>th</sup>, where an impressive 4,443 pounds of trash and debris was removed from beaches and creeks Countywide.

Over 30 students at Adams School planted 50 native plants at the newly constructed bioswale on their campus. Neighbors toured the Upper Las Positas Creek Restoration and Storm Water Management Project at the Santa Barbara Golf Club. Horny Toad Activewear employees cleaned and replaced 110 storm drain markers in the beachfront and downtown areas. County Project Clean Water sold 600 rain barrels in just over 3 hours.

Other events during the week-long celebration included presentations about efforts to restore the endangered steelhead trout to our local creeks, tours of the Arroyo Hondo Preserve and the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Reserve, a bird walk with the Santa Barbara Audubon Society, games and activities hosted by Art From Scrap at the Watershed Resource Center, and an environmental awareness challenge called "Trash Wars" designed by Youth CineMedia.

## **Rain Barrel Sale Saturday, November 21**

Due to the overwhelming response to the County's rain barrel sale during Creek Week in September, the Creeks Division is partnering with Project Clean Water to host another rain barrel sale in Santa Barbara. The sale will take place on Saturday, November 21st from 10:00am - 2:00pm at Santa Barbara City College Parking Lot 3 at Shoreline and Loma Alta. The Systern barrels, normally a \$120 value, will be sold for \$50 each, tax included.

By using rain barrels to capture rainwater for landscape irrigation, residents will not only decrease demand on the municipal water supply, but will also help prevent water pollution by reducing runoff to our storm drains, creeks, and the ocean. For more information, please visit [www.sbwat.org/rainbarrel](http://www.sbwat.org/rainbarrel) or contact the Creeks Division at (805) 897-2606.

cc: Jill Zachary, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director